A SHORT CHARACTER OF HIS EXCELLENCY THOMAS EARL OF WHARTON, LORD LIEUTENANT OF IRELAND

With an Account of some smaller Facts during his Government, which will not be put into the Articles of Impeachment.

London, Aug. 30, 1710.

The Kingdom of *Ireland,* being governed by Deputation from hence, its Annals, since the *English* Establishment, are usually digested under the Heads of the several Governors: But, the Affairs and Events in that Island, for some Years past, have been either so insignificant, or so annexed to those of *England,* that they have not furnished Matter of any great Importance to History. The Share of Honour, which Gentlemen from thence have had by their Conduct and Employments in the Army, turneth all to the Article of this Kingdom; the rest which relateth to Politics, or the Art of Government, is inconsiderable to the last Degree, however it may be represented at Court by those who preside there, and would value themselves upon every Step they make, towards finishing the Slavery of that People, as if it were gaining a mighty Point to the Advantage of *England.*

GENERALLY speaking, the Times which afford most plentiful Matter for Story, are those in which a Man would least chuse to live; such as under the various Events and Revolutions of War, the Intrigues of a ruined Faction, or the Violence of a prevailing one, and lastly the arbitrary, unlawful Acts of oppressing Governors. In the War, *Ireland* hath no Share but in Subordination to us; the same may be said of their Factions, which, at present, are but imperfect Transcripts of ours: But the third Subject for

History, which is arbitrary Power, and Oppression; as it is that by which the People of *Ireland* have for some Time, been distinguished from all her Majesty's* Subjects, so being now at its greatest Height under his Excellency *Thomas* Earl of *Wharton,* a short Account of his Government, may be of some Use or Entertainment to the present Age, although, I hope, it will be incredible to the next: And, because this Account may be judged rather an History of his Excellency, than of his Government, I must here declare that I have not the least View to his Person in any Part of it. I have had the Honour of much Conversation with his Lordship, and am thoroughly convinced how indifferent he is to Applause, and how insensible of Reproach: Which is not a Humour put on to serve a Turn, or keep a Countenance, nor arising from the Consciousness of Innocence, or any Grandeur of Mind, but the meer unaffected Bent of his Nature.

HE is without the Sense of Shame or Glory, as some Men are without the Sense of Smelling; and, therefore, a good Name to him is no more than a precious Ointment would be to these. Whoever, for the Sake of others, were to describe the Nature of a Serpent, a Wolf, a Crocodile or a Fox, must be understood to do it without any personal Love or Hatred for the Animals themselves.

IN the same Manner, his Excellency is one whom I neither personally love nor hate. I see him at Court, at his own House, and sometimes at mine (for I have the Honour of his Visits) and when these Papers are public, it is Odds but he will tell me, as he once did upon a like Occasion, that he is damnably mauled; and then with the easiest Transition in the World, ask about the Weather, or Time of the Day? So that I enter on the Work with more Chearfulness, because I am sure, neither to make him angry, nor any Way hurt his Reputation; a Pitch of Happiness and Security to which his Excellency hath arrived, which no Philosopher before him could reach.

I INTEND to execute this Performance by first giving a Character of his Excellency, and then relating some Facts during his Government, which will serve to confirm it.

I KNOW very well that Mens Characters are best known from their Actions; but these being confined to his Administration in *Ireland,* his Character may, perhaps, take in something more, which the Narrowness of the Time, or the Scene hath not given him Opportunity to exert.

THOMAS, Earl of *Wharton,* Lord Lieutenant of *Ireland,* by the Force of a wonderful Constitution hath some Years passed his Grand Climacteric,[1]

* *Queen* ANNE.

without any visible Effects of old Age, either on his Body or his Mind, and in Spight of a continual Prostitution to those Vices which usually wear out both. His Behaviour is in all the Forms of a young Man at five and twenty. Whether he walketh or whistleth, or sweareth, or talketh Bawdy, or calleth Names, he acquitteth himself in each beyond a Templar[2] of three Years standing. With the same Grace, and in the same Style he will rattle his Coachman in the Middle of the Street, where he is Governor of the Kingdom; and, all this is without Consequence, because it is in his Character, and what every Body expecteth. He seemeth to be but an ill Dissembler, and an ill Liar, although they are the two Talents he most practiseth, and most valueth himself upon. The Ends he hath gained by Lying appear to be more owing to the Frequency, than the Art of them: His Lies being sometimes detected in an Hour, often in a Day, and always in a Week. He tells them freely in mixed Companies, although he knows half of those that hear him to be his Enemies, and is sure they will discover them the Moment they leave him. He sweareth solemnly he loveth, and will serve you; and your Back is no sooner turned, but he tells those about him you are a Dog and a Rascal. He goeth constantly to Prayers in the Forms of his Place, and will talk Bawdy and Blasphemy at the Chapel Door. He is a Presbyterian in Politics, and an Atheist in Religion; but he chuseth at present to whore with a Papist. In his Commerce with mankind his general Rule is, to endeavour to impose on their Understanding, for which he hath but one Receipt, a Composition of Lies and Oaths: And this he applieth indifferently, to a Freeholder of forty Shillings, and a Privy-Counsellor; by which the Easy and the Honest are often either deceived or amused, and either Way he gaineth his Point. He will openly take away your Employment To-day, because you are not of his Party; To-morrow he will meet or send for you, as if nothing at all had passed, lay his Hands with much Friendship on your Shoulders, and with the greatest Ease and Familiarity, tell you that the Faction are driving at something in the House; that you must be sure to attend, and to speak to all your Friends to be there, although he knoweth at the same Time, that you and your Friends are against him in the very Point he mentioneth: And however absurd, ridiculous and gross this may appear, he hath often found it successful, some Men having such an aukward Bashfulness, they know not how to refuse on a sudden, and every Man having something to hope or fear, which often hinders them from driving Things to Extremes with Persons of Power, whatever Provocations they may have received. He hath sunk his Fortune by endeavouring to ruin one

Kingdom,* and hath raised it by going far in the Ruin of another.† With a good natural Understanding, a great Fluency in Speaking, and no ill Taste of Wit, he is generally the worst Companion in the World; his Thoughts being wholely taken up between Vice and Politics, so that Bawdy, Prophaneness and Business, fill up his whole Conversation. To gratify himself in the two first he maketh use of suitable Favourites, whose Talents reach no higher than to entertain him with all the Lewdness that passeth in Town. As for Business, he is said to be very dextrous at that Part of it which turneth upon Intrigue, and he seemeth to have transferred those Talents of his Youth for intriguing with Women, into public Affairs. For, as some vain young Fellows, to make a Gallantry appear of Consequence, will chuse to venture their Necks by climbing up a Wall or Window at Midnight to a common Wench, where they might as freely have gone in at the Door, and at Noon-Day; so his Excellency, either to keep himself in Practice, or advance the Fame of his Politics, affects the most obscure, troublesome, and winding Paths, even in the most common Affairs, those which would be brought about as well in the ordinary Forms, or would follow of Course whether he intervened or not.

HE bears the Gallantries of his Lady with the Indifference of a Stoic, and thinks them well recompenced by a Return of Children to support his Family without the Fatigues of being a Father. He has three predominant Passions, which you will seldom find united in the same Man, as arising from different Dispositions of Mind, and naturally thwarting each other: These are Love of Power, Love of Money, and Love of Pleasure; they ride him sometimes by Turns, and sometimes all together: Since he went into *Ireland,* he seemeth most disposed to the second, and hath met with great Success, having gained by his Government, of under two Years, five and forty thousand Pounds by the most favourable Computation, half in the regular Way, and half in the prudential.

HE was never yet known to refuse or keep a Promise; as I remember he told a Lady, but with an Exception to the Promise he then made (which was to get her a Pension) yet he broke even that, and I confess, deceived us both. But here I desire to distinguish between a Promise and a Bargain; for he will be sure to keep the latter when he has the fairest Offer.

THUS much for his Excellency's Character: I shall now proceed to his Actions, only during the Time he was Governor of *Ireland,* which were

* *England.*

† *Ireland.*

transmitted to me by an eminent Person in Business there, who had all Opportunities of being well informed, and whose Employment did not lie at his Excellency's Mercy.

THIS Intelligence being made up of several Facts independent of each other, I shall hardly be able to relate them in due Order of Time, my Correspondent omitting that Circumstance, and transmitting them to me just as he recollected them; so that the Gentlemen of that Kingdom, now in Town, will, I hope, pardon me any Slips I shall make in that or any other Kind, while I keep exactly to the Truth.

THOMAS PROBY, Esq; Chirurgeon-General of *Ireland,* a Person universally esteemed, and whom I have formerly seen here, had built a Country-House, half a Mile from *Dublin,* adjoining to the Phœnix Park. In a Corner of the Park, just under his House, he was much annoyed with a Dog-kennel which belonged to the Government; upon which he applied to *Thomas,* Earl of *Pembroke,* then Lord Lieutenant, and to the Commissioners of the Revenue, for a Lease of about five Acres of that Part of the Park. His Petition was referred to the Lord Treasurer here, and sent back for a Report, which was in his Favour, and the Bargain so hard, that the Lord Treasurer struck off some Part of the Rent. He had a Lease granted him, for which he was to build another Kennel, provide Ice yearly for the Government, and pay a certain Rent; the Land might be worth about thirty Shillings an Acre. His Excellency, soon after his Arrival in *Ireland,* was told of this Lease, and by his absolute Authority commanded Mr. *Proby* to surrender up the Land; which he was forced to do, after all the Expence he had been at, or else, must have expected to lose his Employment; at the same Time he is under an Obligation to pay his Rent, and, I think, he doth it to this Day. There are several Circumstances in this Story which I have forgot, having not been sent to me with the rest; but, I had it from a Gentleman of that Kingdom, who some Time ago was here.

UPON his Excellency's being declared Lord Lieutenant, there came over to make his Court one Dr. *Lloyd,* Fellow of Trinity College, *Dublin,* noted in that Kingdom for being the only Clergyman that declared for taking off the Sacramental Test, as he did openly in their Convocation of which he was a Member. The Merit of this, and some other Principles suitable to it, recommended by *Tom Broderick,* so far ingratiated him with his Excellency, that being provided of a proper Chaplain already, he took him however into a great Degree of Favour: The Doctor attended his Excellency to *Ireland,* and observing a cast Wench in the Family to be in much Confidence with my Lady, he thought by addressing there, to have

a short open Passage to Preferment. He met with great Success in his Amour; and walking one Day with his Mistress after my Lord and Lady in the Castle-Garden, my Lady said to his Excellency, "What do you think? we are going to lose poor *Foydy,*" a Name of Fondness they usually gave her. "How do you mean?" said my Lord. "Why the Doctor behind us is resolved to take her from us." "Is he, by G—d? why then (G—d d—mn me) he shall have the first Bishoprick that falls."*

THE Doctor, thus encouraged, grew a most violent Lover, returned with his Excellency for *England;* and soon after, the Bishoprick of *Cork* falling void, to shew he meant fair, he married his Damsel publickly here in *London,* and his Excellency as honourably engaged his Credit to get him the Bishoprick; but, the Matter was reckoned so infamous, that both the Archbishops here, especially his Grace of *York,* interposed with the Queen, to hinder so great a Scandal to the Church, and Dr. *Brown,* Provost of *Dublin* College, being then in Town, her Majesty was pleased to nominate him; so that Dr. *Lloyd* was forced to sit down with a moderate Deanery in the Northern Parts of that Kingdom, and the additional Comfort of a sweet Lady, who brought this her first Husband no other Portion, than a Couple of Olive Branches for his Table, though she herself hardly knoweth by what Hand they were planted.

THE Queen reserveth all the great Employments of *Ireland* to be given by herself, though often by the Recommendation of the chief Governor, according to his Credit at Court. The Provostship of *Dublin* College is of this Number, which was now vacant, upon the Promotion of Dr. *Brown;* Dr. *Benjamin Pratt,* a Fellow of that College, and Chaplain to the House of Commons of that Kingdom, as well as domestic Chaplain to the Duke of *Ormond,* was at that Time here, in Attendance upon the Duke. He is a Gentleman of good Birth and Fortune in *Ireland,* and lived here in a very decent Figure: He is a Person of Wit and Learning, hath travelled and conversed in the best Company, and was very much esteemed among us here when I had the Pleasure of his Acquaintance: But, he had the original Sin of being a reputed Tory, and a Dependent on the Duke of *Ormond;* however, he had many Friends among the Bishops and other Nobility to recommend him to the Queen; at the same Time there was another Fellow of that College, one Dr. *Hall,* who had much the Advantage of *Pratt* in Point of Seniority; this Gentleman had very little introduced himself into

* *It was confidently reported, as a Conceit of his Excellency, that, talking upon this Subject, he once said with great Pleasure, that he hoped to make his W——e*[3] *a Bishop.*

the World, but lived retired, although otherwise said to be an excellent Person, and very deserving for his Learning and Sense: He had been recommended from *Ireland* by several Persons, and his Excellency, who had never before seen nor thought of him, after having tried to injure the College by recommending Persons from this Side, at last set up *Hall,* with all imaginable Zeal against *Pratt.* I tell this Story the more fully, because it is affirmed, by his Excellency's Friends, that he never made more Use of his Court Skill, than at this Time, to stop Dr. *Pratt*'s Promotion; not only from the Personal Hatred he had to the Man, on Account of his Patron and Principles, but that he might return to *Ireland* with some little Opinion of his Credit at Court; which had mightily suffered by many Disappointments, especially that of his Chaplain Dr *Lloyd.* It would be incredible to relate the man Artifices he used to this End, of which the Doctor had daily intelligence, and would fairly tell his Excellency so at his Levees,[4] who sometimes could not conceal his Surprize, and then would promise with half a dozen Oaths, never to concern himself one Way or other; these were broke every Day, and every Day detected. One Morning, after some Expostulation between the Doctor and his Excellency, and a few additional Oaths, that he would never oppose him more, his Excellency went immediately to the Bishop of *Ely,* and prevailed on him to go to the Queen, from him, and let her Majesty know, that he never could consent, as long as he lived, that Dr. *Pratt* should be Provost, which the Bishop barely complied with, and delivered his Message; although at the same Time he did the Dr. all the good Offices he could. The next Day the Doctor was again with his Excellency, and gave him Thanks for so open a Proceeding; the Affair was now past dissembling, and his Excellency, owned he did not oppose him directly, but confessed he did it collaterally. The Doctor, a little warmed, said, "No, my Lord, you mean directly you did not, but indirectly you did." The Conclusion was, that the Queen named the Doctor to the Place; and, as a further Mortification, just upon the Day of his Excellency's Departure for *Ireland.*

BUT here I must desire the Reader's Pardon, if I cannot digest the following Facts in so good a Manner as I intended; because it is thought expedient, for some Reasons, that the World should be informed of his Excellency's Merits as soon as possible. I will therefore only transcribe the several Passages as they were sent me from *Dublin,* without either correcting the Style, or adding any Remarks of my own. As they are, they may serve for Hints to any Person, who may hereafter have a Mind to write Memoirs of his Excellency's Life.

A Short Character of Thomas Earl of Wharton (p. 229)

First printed in December 1710. Thomas, First Earl of Wharton (1648–1715), was a Whig leader and magnate. Lord Lieutenant of Ireland between 1708 and 1710, he resigned on August 30, 1710, the date Swift gives for this satiric pamphlet.

1. *Grand Climacteric:* the 63rd year; the product of two mystical numbers, 7 and 9, and regarded as a critical stage in life. On 7, 9, and 63 as mystical numbers see *A Tale of a Tub,* Section X (p. 101).
2. *a Templar:* law student of the Temple in London.
3. (note): W————e: whore.
4. *Levees:* receptions.